244 is today; instead, women gathered its fruit in the bush. Once
773 upon a time, there was a man who had no sister he could sell to obtain a wife for himself, nor did he have any other person who could help him to get married. He hit upon the idea of starting a huge ngon farm, and when the ngon was ripe many people came and bought the kernels. In this way he finally earned so much money that he had the purchase price for a girl. When other people, who likewise had no wives, heard about this, they began to imitate him and also married through the aid of the plant. Hence, it is said: "Oh, I see this plant like a girl (ngó'n), and therefore it shall be called ngŏn also, for if the man had had no ngon (ngŏn), he would not have been able to marry a girl
● [194] (ngō'n)." It should be noted that the two words differ in pitch; the word for the plant has falling pitch in Fang (ngô̌n), rising pitch in Jaunde (ngŏn), whereas the word for girl has only high pitch (ngō'n). A narrative in the creation story is very similar.

244 Ngon is planted only once a year since its cultivation requires the period from April to December. In April, frequently long before, the bush is cut and burned. The ground, however, is not cleared, and everything is left lying just as it fell; at most the largest brushwood is removed from the connecting paths. Walking through a farm, especially along the plantation paths, is therefore quite a gymnastic feat. A ngon farm is often cleared
[476 communally by the inhabitants of two neighboring villages who
602] belong to the same kin group. To the uninitiated, however, the boundaries are not discernible. They are indicated by trees that have been left standing or have fallen over and more rarely by lianas tied to the branches of tree trunks lying on the ground. It is astonishing that no boundary disputes arise.

244 In April, once the farm area has been burned over, the
462 women go into the fields, and with their universal tool, the hoe, they plant the ngon seeds in the ground. The seeds must first have been soaked in water for a day, and two or three of them are planted in the same hole. Because of the tree trunks and the brush lying about, planting is hard work, and for this reason the men usually assist at the task, at least on the first day, equipped with /95/ /Fig. 53 appears here in the original text/ hoes and digging

197 in Spanish Guinea. It is advancing to east and south and tending to replace Pongwé as a trade language. Its progress remains handicapped by the existence of several transcriptions that borrow simultaneously from different dialects, a fact which hinders standardization of the dialect. It seems however that the dialect of the west—Mazouna or Betsi—is gaining on that of the east—Mekina or Maké—which, moreover, has provided fewer elements in the transcriptions.

The differences between Ewôndo, Boulou, and Fang are unmistakable, but not such, however, as to prevent communication. The syntax is practically identical, the grammatical differences unimportant. The distinctions between different kinds of speech are chiefly related to pronunciation and vocabulary.

194 197 As for pronunciation, there is a striking resemblance between Fang and Ewôndo, which is rather surprising, since the two groups are separated by the Boulou enclave and do not have, or no longer have, direct contacts. Ewôndo is a little less harsh, a little less guttural than Fang, while Boulou is neither in any way. Above all, Boulou is quite without r, ordinary or fricative (r, x), replacing it with t or, more recently, with a velar l:

arki (Ew.), arigi (F.) = ahlki (B.)
kalara (Ew.), kalaghĕ (F.) = kalat (B.)

Boulou usually avoids hard or emphatic intervocalic occlusives (g, k, gh, kh) and replaces them with a vocalic plosive /attaque vocalique/ or a rough aspirate:

saghele (F.), sakélé (Ew.) = sa'ale (B.)
afôghele (F.) = afô'ôlo (B.)

It omits many of the initial nasals of Fang:

Nzame (F.) = Zambe (B.);

and uses j (ʒ) in preference to dz:

zé (F., Ew.) = jé (B.);

likewise ty (tʃ) in preference to, or together with, k:

ôkeñ (F.) = ôtyeñ (B.).

192 From the point of view of vocabulary the three kinds of speech differ chiefly in their borrowings from neighboring languages. Guthrie estimates these loan words at not more than 5 percent of the vocabulary of the Pahouin group, but the proportion is greater in Ewôndo and in Fang, in the latter reaching 20 percent. The borrowings come from the Myéné group for Fang, from Ati for Ewôndo. Boulou borrows indirectly /21/ from Myéné and Ati, directly from

193 pl. bisa) it means "extended family." The two words (which have different tones) come from sak, to ejaculate, to f.... /sic: probably foutre/ which would have led to *nsak, besak = genitor, father.

The pronominal classifiers have an important and typical role, that of connecting a noun and its complement or a noun-subject and its verb. Nevertheless, this rule does not seem to be absolute, and Boulou especially is quite ready to omit the connective in the genitive, particularly in the singular:

jɔ̂m é ntañgan or jɔ̂m ntañgan, biɔ̂m bi ntañgan or biɔ̂m ntañgan = thing or things of whiteness;

mon a fañ, bo' be fañ = a or some Fang;

alu e ne dibi, melu me ne dibi = the night (s) is (are) dark;

mvu j'adi, bemvu b'adi = the dog (s) eats (eat).

Fundamentally, verbs are divided into verbs of state or position and verbs of action, which are not conjugated the same way. One type is derived from another by affixation to the radical, which makes it possible to complete the defective conjugation of verbs of state by recourse to their active derivatives. Tense, mood, voice, and aspect are indicated either by affixation or inflection, or by using auxiliary verbs, some of which have a meaning by themselves, while others may only be used with another verb (the last are perhaps simple affixes).

Pronouns and pronoun-adjectives are well represented, while qualifying adjectives are rare, especially in Boulou, and are most frequently replaced by nouns of quality or state that do not agree. The same is to be observed concerning tool-words /mots-outils/: aside from a few adverbs, the invariable conjunction and preposition, nouns are mainly used:

éyoñ = time, circumstance = when; mfa'a = direction, orientation = toward; ajɔ̂ te = this matter = thus, therefore, consequently, etc.

194 114 From the phonetic point of view the outstanding trait of the group is undoubtedly the use of tones, which is the basis of telephony by drum (nkul), bell (nkeñ), or modulated cry (ékiga). Bates and Johnson recognize five tones, plus the glissando of the negative. Bertaut, following the German scholars, distinguishes two fundamental tones, high and low; two derived ones, ascending and descending;

and a middle tone. Father Stoll, raising the problem again in a recent work, turns it upside down by describing two fundamental tones, symmetrically contrasted, two dominant tones, and eight compound /composés/ or gliding ones, all of them together classed as eight principal (four simple and four gliding) and four secondary ones. He connects this symmetrical system with the cosmogony, proving his point with an illustration from the sô rite. The battle among specialists is too violent for me to express an opinion. I shall restrict myself /25/ to pointing out that the nkul and the nkeñ only give two tones, and that in sending a message by one of these methods rhythm plays as important a part as do the tones (1).

1. But the balafo, mejeñ, consist of five xylophones of different tonality, each having six notes.

In the spoken language, and especially in formal speech, rhythm is just as important, and even those missionaries who possess a fine enough ear to avoid involuntary puns through tone usually do not succeed in mastering rhythm as can the last of the poet-storytellers. Current transcriptions do not, moreover, take rhythm or tone into account, the meaning of homographs emerging from their context. I think I observed here as elsewhere that the younger generation is inclined to forget the fine points of the language and no longer distinguish more than two tones, high and low, while the use of the nkul is daily losing ground.

A final important element in the language, especially in the oral literature, is represented by exclamative-descriptives, a series of locutions based on onomatopoeias or derived from verbs or modified nouns, reduplicated and often introduced by an exclamative particle or a click (2). Some of them are sufficiently accepted to be used in

2. Bertaut is one of the rare authors, if not the only one, to point out these clicks. I know of three in general use: one of approval, one of denial, one of warning. Others exist, used in hunting and still little known, which were perhaps borrowed from the Pygmies.

written texts, but the majority remain current only in the spoken language, the speaker moreover not hesitating to invent as need arises.

4. Classification

Most writers, from Meinhof to Guthrie, class the languages of the Pahouin group with the Bantu. In his general classification of Bantu languages (1948), Guthrie puts them in his area A, under the decimal number 60, including Ewǒndo, Bulu /Boulou/, Ntum /Ntoumou/, Mekaé, Zimu, Faň /Fang/ (the so-called Betsi or Mazouna dialect, although he does not specify this) and Makɛ́ (doubtless eastern Fang, the dialect called Makina). Stoll includes Ewôndo in his work on the Bantu and semi-Bantu languages of the Cameroons, without specifying whether he classes it with one or the other (3).

> 3. In its reports to the United Nations, the Cameroons government qualifies the Pahouin of the southern Cameroons as "neo-Bantu."

Yet it seems certain that, if these languages are really to be included in the Bantu family, they form a special category, which cannot be likened purely and simply to the unquestionably Bantu languages of adjacent populations. Besides, there is discussion as to whether the Pahouin invaders brought their language with them or have adopted and changed that of the peoples established before them on the Cameroons-Gabon plateau. There has also been some hesitation about classing the languages /26/ of the border tribes, notably Mekaé and Kozimé, either with the Pahouin group or with the adjacent Bantu groups. For instance, while it is agreed to put Ngumba beside the Bantu languages of the coast, Mekaé, which is certainly related to it, is classed sometimes with the Pahouin tongues, sometimes with those of the Bantu of the eastern Cameroons.

The existence of a nominal gender (Bates' Class III) lacking a classifier prevents our putting the group among "agglutinating languages with a perfect class system having a special pronoun for each class," where Delafosse places Bantu. Mademoiselle Homburger (Le langage et les langues /Speech and Language/, p. 69) makes of it a separate family, close both to coastal Bantu and to semi-Bantu. In the chapter she devotes to Bantu in Les langues du monde /Languages of the World/

the two opposite angles and would represent the axis of migration, mfa'a mañ, "toward the sea." The masculine direction seems to have been the place of origin of the ye (feminine?) clans, the feminine direction, that of the ésa clans. Trilles places with the latter the ébi clans, which are, geographically, from eastern clans; I wonder if they ought not rather to be connected with the ye clans since ébi means "hole," "chasm" (yee = valley, ravine). In the bilaba, masculine commodities come from the female sector, and vice versa.

These apparent contradictions would be resolved by applying the principle of double symmetry, or of sexual complementarity, similar to that which makes paternal, nonuterine half brothers called bobenyañ, "my mother's sons." This principle might be expressed somewhat as follows: every being capable of life must, in order to exist and be complete, include the opposite sex. In other words, bisexuality, a universal vital principle, should be found in every part of the universe /création/. Stoll finds proof of this in the language, where the tone levels in his view constitute genuine differentiation by grammatical sex genders, and especially in the rites whose purpose appears to be not to make men entirely masculine or women entirely feminine, but rather to give to each sex the necessary complement of the opposite sex.

Whatever may be thought of this theory, it is a fact that, because of the apparent or real absence of grammatical sex gender in the language, the majority of the early writers, even Trilles, did not attach enough importance to real gender, to the sex actually attributed to objects, particularly to magical and ritual materials. We know that spear, akoñ, saber, fa, and probably the large drum, mbaé, are male; calabashes and cooking pots, rattles (mengoñ), the double bell (nkeñ) are female; the drum-telephone, nkul, is androgynous; horns for medicaments, minlak, are male at the pointed end, female at the hollow end, and the same with the rifle. As to numbers, my conclusions are diametrically opposed to those of Stoll, who believes even numbers to be male, and odd, female, though admittedly he advances as proof the large part played by odd numbers in feminine rites, which runs directly counter to his theory of double symmetry.

The numerical system is in any event only imperfectly known. Counting is based on 10, with traces of an 8:10, (awôm), basis /116/ and of 8, mwom, /having?/ perhaps the same root as different classifiers. The so number is 9. Nyin, 4, seems related to a YI

101
197

> of the Nsex branch pronounce this way, the northern tribes -- Kombé, Banoko, and others belonging to the Mpongwé branch -- have made "Mpangwé, as none of the languages of the Gabon or Mpongwé group let a word end with a consonant but always require a vowel. "Mpangwé" became "Mpangwen" for the French and soon thereafter "Mpangwin"; it has now turned into "Mpawin," "Pawin," and finally "Pahouin," in which form it is indeed difficult to recognize the original.

101 because these three words [12] refer to the same people -- are the most important tribe of the French Congo and the German [now French] Cameroons.

101
197 The Fan proper are divided into four distinct families with respect to dialects: Bétsi [Betsi], Méké [Mekei], Fôn, and Bulé [Boale] (in manners and customs they are all absolutely alike). These four groups do not speak such different dialects that they cannot understand one another unless at first meeting; they certainly do so after several days of association.

[Five paragraphs in pp. 12-13 deleted here. --Translator]

101 [13][Of the four groups] the first two are by far the best known, having made the first migrations or at least having been the first in contact with the white man. Everything that has been written about the Fan relates to these [two], particularly to the Bétsi.

The Bulé group is often considered to be connected with either the Fan or the Yaundé, through whom it would form the intermediary link with the Méké. The Fôn (1), or people of the

> 1. Fôn, bamboo pith, dark depths of the forest.

interior, as the etymology of their name indicates, have remained up to the present time altogether inland beyond the Bétsi and Méké. Their dialect relates them to the Bétsi, differing in being more guttural. The tribes live closely intertwined in the same

[197 194]